

deficits under President Bush combined. If I could show you the projected deficits, they are all trillion-dollar deficits out for 10 years as far as we can look.

So I think we need to really question some of the rhetoric we are hearing about fiscal responsibility about this present administration. These deficits have both immediate and long-term consequences. The long-term consequences are the debt that we are leaving to our children. In the more immediate term, they represent the eroding of our standing in the world. They are going to feed inflation and undermine the value of the dollar.

Last month, I met with a delegation of Chinese officials. The first question they asked me was, "Congressman, is America abandoning the free market system?"

I mean the world is watching us, and they have expressed some hesitancy about buying more of our debt. I think, when we go in the market this year with \$2 trillion or \$3 trillion in treasuries to fund our budget, it is going to be harder and harder to find willing buyers.

When the rest of the world watches as the U.S. Government takes over private businesses, as government spending grows and as the government crowds out the private sector and stifles innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit on which this Nation was founded, we have serious problems. When we take these kinds of actions and make these kinds of policies, we are jeopardizing our standing in the world and our future.

How can we be the leader of the free world with this kind of government intervention and undermining of the free market?

I also want to point out here that there is a good lesson here on this bottom chart. You see these 4 years right here in a row. That is when the Republicans were in control of Congress and when President Clinton was in office. For the first time in years, we balanced the budget 4 consecutive years in a row, and we paid down on the public debt 4 years in a row. Now, Clinton deserves some credit, and the Congress deserves some credit, but we balanced the budget 4 years in a row.

The lesson here is that real bipartisanship works. The phony bipartisanism of wanting us to come in at the last minute and vote for something that we did not have any opportunity to create or to craft in the first place will not work. Real bipartisanship works and policies matter, and some policies help create an environment in which our economy can thrive.

The government cannot create wealth. The American people, entrepreneurs and businesses must do that. Yet the government can and at times has implemented flawed policies like spending too much, taxing too much and borrowing too much like we are seeing right now. Those policies have economic consequences.

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OMNIBUS LANDS BILL THREATENS SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) for 3 minutes. Mrs. LUMMIS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to support the Hastings amendment to the omnibus lands bill. I want to give you two examples why and they couldn't be farther apart and still be in America.

One is here in Washington, D.C. I had a friend who worked for the Federal Government who was getting threatening phone calls from a disgruntled former employee. She was an older woman who lived alone and worked for an agency here in the Federal Government. And so she got a concealed weapons permit to protect herself and was commuting in and out of D.C. to an adjacent State. Having that concealed weapon would have been illegal under the new judge's ruling, which is why the Hastings amendment to the omnibus lands bill needs to be adopted.

Now here is my example from the West. It is springtime. We're just starting to fix fence after a long winter that broke down some of the fences. When you're sitting on the ground fixing a fence and you're sitting right next to a rattlesnake, it can be very disconcerting. So a number of us carry weapons while we're fixing fence. If you let a weapon be hidden under your coat, even accidentally, you need a concealed weapons permit. So some people get concealed weapons permits and carry a weapon while they're fixing fence. Well, if you happen to be one of those people who is also driving between Cody, Wyoming and Jackson, Wyoming, you're going to go through Yellowstone National Park. That is your commute. And it would be illegal to have that weapon under this recent judge's ruling.

Mr. Speaker, both the Bush and the Obama administration have pushed forward with a rule to allow the carrying of concealed weapons on these lands subject to local State laws. By doing so, they bring these public lands in line with millions of acres of BLM and Forest Service lands where the application of local gun laws have guided our public land managers well. It took just one U.S. District Judge to throw that consistency out the window, but this Congress has the opportunity to renew it should the Democrat leadership in the House allow just one simple amendment to address the protection of our second amendment rights. Sadly, they are refusing to do so, placing the importance of a political win on the public lands omnibus bill above the constitutional rights of our citizenry to keep and bear arms.

I urge the Rules Committee and the House Democrat leadership to reconsider their priorities and to allow us to protect second amendment rights when we consider the public lands bill tomorrow.

RECORD DEBT, HIGHEST DEFICIT SINCE WORLD WAR II: BIPARTISAN SAFE COMMISSION IS THE WAY FORWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, the national debt topped \$11 trillion for the first time in history. On Friday, the Congressional Budget Office reported that the Federal deficit will soar past \$1.8 trillion this year, which would be the highest recorded since World War II, deficits for as far as the eye can see.

By 2019 the government will be paying over \$800 billion annually just in interest on the debt, borrowing money from China and other countries.

Congressman COOPER of Tennessee and I have introduced the bipartisan SAFE Commission Act to create a national commission aimed at addressing entitlement spending and our national tax policy with everything on the table. It's bipartisan, with exactly 26 Republicans and 26 Democrats joining as original cosponsors. A similar proposal in the Senate has the support of Senator KENT CONRAD, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, and ranking member Senator JUDD GREGG.

The commission would force Congress to act on the mountains of debt under which we are burying our children and our grandchildren. Without it, we will have the same old tired process, drawing lines in the sand while the tsunami of debt comes crashing over our shores.

According to a recent Peter Hart/Public Opinion Strategies survey, 56 percent of registered voters prefer a bipartisan commission to the regular congressional process as the best means of tackling our growing budget deficit and national debt. The current process isn't working. In other words, the American people understand we are in trouble, yet Congress continues to fiddle while Rome burns. Congress is made up of parents and grandparents, yet we seem to be prepared to push all of the debt we are creating off to our children and grandchildren.

The American people are experiencing a crisis in confidence and they are worried about our country. When we gain control of reckless spending, we will be able to rebuild the economy and see a brighter and stronger America, stronger for us and stronger for our children and our grandchildren, to bring about a renaissance.

How will history judge the 111th Congress if it doesn't deal with this issue? Cosponsoring the Cooper-Wolf SAFE Commission is supporting the bipartisan way forward. If any Member has a better idea than can honestly pass this place, then they ought to put it forward. If they can't, we should pass the Cooper-Wolf bill.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair